

From the Field: Housing the Homeless

Mr. M is an 84-year-old Hispanic male who has lived in the streets of a Los Angeles community for more than 20 years. He used to coach soccer for the kids in the area and the parents reimbursed him with food, clothes, and sometimes money. During the past five years, he has been living in a bus stop. The kids he used to coach in soccer are now grown and have been providing him with some of his basic needs over the years. On rainy days, the laundry behind the bus stop provided him with shelter.

According to the owner of the laundry, throughout the years, several homeless outreach agencies attempted to connect Mr. M to services, but he was always reluctant to accept. The last agency trying to engage Mr. M referred him to Senate Bill (SB) 82 program in late October, after 10 months of unsuccessful attempts themselves. Surprisingly, the SB 82 members who contacted the client succeeded in engaging him very quickly and on the third contact, the client agreed to relocate to a Temporary Shelter Program (TSP).

From that point forward, the rapport with the client strengthened progressively. During the following one-month period, the client agreed to go with the team to see a physician for a physical check-up and a psychiatrist at a Mental Health Urgent Care Center (UCC). The team also drove him to the Mexican Consulate in an attempt to secure a birth certificate, as the client had lost all his documents. He was also taken to the DPSS office to apply for General Relief funding and to the Department of Motor Vehicles to obtain a California ID card. While the team worked on finding permanent housing, he was referred to an Adult Day Care Center to provide him daytime activities.

In late November, the client was referred to the Older Adult Full Service Partnership (FSP) and by early December, he was interviewed by his FSP case worker. The two programs, SB 82 and the FSP agency, collaborated in transitioning the client to his new case worker, and by February, the client was permanently housed at an assisted living home in a neighboring community.

During the first month of Mr. M's involvement with the FSP program, the SB 82 staff will continue to visit him weekly and will decrease the visitation frequency to every other week, as the client becomes familiar and establishes new attachments in his new FSP program environment.